



Universal Acceptance Day Uruguay - May 26 , 2025

Uruguay in the context of the Universalization of the Internet

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Moderator: **Raúl Echeberría** – ALAI / ISOCuy

Raúl Echeberría (Moderator):

He introduced the panel by highlighting the importance of multilingual domains as tools for preserving cultural and linguistic identities. He emphasized that, although Latin America has fewer barriers than other regions, such as the Caucasus or Asia, it is still essential to make diversity visible on the Internet. He also noted that the technical effort to implement UA must be accompanied by a reflection on its social and cultural impact.

1. Mariela de León (UDELAR - SeCIU)

Technical and political role of the .uy domain:

- SeCIU has managed the .uy domain since its inception and coordinates the IT infrastructure of the University of the Republic.
- The domain includes support for IDNs (internationalized domain names), although their use is still low: of 106,000 registered domains, only 534 include special characters.

Challenges current :

- Uruguay is among the three Latin American countries with the highest IDN adoption, but it is still less than 1%.
- The current system does not allow internationalized email addresses (IEEs), creating barriers for international researchers and users whose names contain special characters.

Proposals for action :

- Suggest alternative domains with local characters during the registration process.
- Internally encourage the implementation of guidelines on linguistic accessibility and acceptability at UDELAR.
- Participate in the design of institutional forms and websites with support for local characters, balancing acceptability and computer security.

Governance of . uy :

- Decisions are made by a multi-stakeholder committee with the participation of AGESIC, Antel, private registrars, and the university, which has been considered an exemplary model at the regional level.
 - The need to also include civil society as a formal stakeholder is recognized .
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2. Laureana Pavón (University of Montevideo / ISOC UY)

Perspective linguistic and cultural:

- Defends the linguistic right to one's own name as a fundamental dimension of digital identity.
- He highlights how technology can condition or impoverish language, citing the historical example of the absence of accents in capital letters due to limitations in typewriters.

Accessibility and inclusion :

- Screen readers for people with visual impairments require proper coding to interpret accented words correctly.
- Technical errors or limitations may alter the meaning of words and cause exclusion.

Impact of AI on translation:

- Although machine translation tools are useful, they require digital literacy to prevent errors, biases or misunderstandings (e.g. " hallucinations " of the models).
 - It proposes accompanying technological tools with human intervention and training for their critical use.
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3. Daniel Mordecki (AGESIC)

Long-term digital policy in Uruguay:

- The founding of AGESIC enabled the establishment of digital inclusion policies with a 20-year vision, overcoming political cycles.
- He emphasized that the world is now digital, and those who cannot participate in it are relegated to "second-class citizens."

Principles of action public :

- Inclusion without concessions, with minimal barriers.
- The use of technologies must be aligned with social impacts, not with fads or commercial impositions.
- He criticized the lack of leadership in systems design: many decisions affecting accessibility are made without strategic vision.

Interoperability and leadership :

- The State must ensure that its systems interact with each other without forcing citizens to be intermediaries of information.
 - He called for the development of leaders who are aware of the importance of digital technology, from the parliamentary level to technical managers.
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4. Fabricio Scrollini (HOTOSM / OpenStreetMap)

Experience from open data and humanitarian mapping:

- He emphasized that not being represented on a map or in a database is equivalent to not existing.
- He recalled that OpenStreetMap was born as a citizen response to the lack of access to public geographic information.

Criticism of technical homogenization:

- Map and database labels often reflect a cultural view of the global north.
- He mentions cases where communities are unable to name their places as they culturally recognize them, which perpetuates practices of digital colonialism.

Role of civil society:

- It is the “sounding board” that makes visible what formal systems ignore.
 - It calls for assuming the decision-making power that technicians, managers, and users have when configuring systems, choosing standards, or prioritizing accessibility.
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5. Mauro D. Ríos (ISOC Uruguay)

Languages and digital power :

- Spanish is the third most used language on the Internet, but many indigenous or minority languages are at risk of disappearing.
- He complains that multilingual digitalization initiatives often remain temporary pilots, lacking sustainability.

Technical support chain :

- Accepting multilingual domains and emails is not enough: the entire technical infrastructure must be consistent (servers, DNS, software).
- He noted that much of the technology already supports these standards, but it is not properly configured.

AI as an audit and automation tool:

- It proposes using AI agents to map the real-world state of national infrastructure (e.g., email, DNS) and automate configurations that promote linguistic inclusion.
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Debate with the audience and final reflections

Key topics addressed :

- The challenge of incorporating inclusion from the technical design phase (and not as an afterthought).
- Leadership's responsibility to ensure that forms and platforms accommodate linguistic diversity.
- Real-life cases of historical failures (e.g., interoperability between ANEP and UDELAR) that could have been resolved when there was coordinated political and technical will.

Overall panel conclusion:

All panelists agreed that linguistic and cultural inclusion on the Internet must be a strategic priority. The tools exist, but political will, technical leadership, and digital literacy are needed. Uruguay has a favorable ecosystem, but still needs to make progress in technical configurations, full adoption of EAI/IDN standards, and more active civil society participation in digital governance.